

Town of Amherst  
Cable Advisory Committee  
Town Hall  
Amherst, MA 01002  
cable@amherstma.gov

December 1, 2005

Dear Town Meeting Member:

Every ten years the Town has to go through the painstaking legally required process of relicensing our cable access provider, now Comcast. The current license expires at the end of next June. The Cable Advisory Committee has been working on this for a couple of years. On the basis of our previous experience with relicensing and what we have learned in the current renewal, we have drafted a renewal license incorporating what we think are the needs of Town residents, the schools and Town government. This is part of a process technically and legally called ascertainment.

In the negotiations for the next license a major issue for the Town will be increased exposure on the government access channel (17) for meetings not only of the Select Board, but of many other committees. ACTV, the non-profit corporation which operates the public, educational and governmental access channels for the Town, is contractually required only to cablecast Town Meeting, with Select Board coverage when resources are available. Town Meeting is one of the most popular programs on the cable. While we know that there is demand for coverage of other meetings and activities, demonstrating that demand for the ascertainment process is another matter.

So we come to you. We need letters and emails from as many members of Town Meeting as we can get. What would you like to see on the government channel? Should all Select Board meetings be cablecast? What other board and committee meetings and other government-related events should get coverage? How can the Town make the best use of the three channels available to us--the public access channel 12, the educational access channel 15, and the governmental access channel 17? Would you be willing to sit down right now and drop us a line? Our email address is at the top of this letter, or if you'd rather commit your comments to paper, you can send letters to us at Town Hall (4 Boltwood Avenue).

While we especially invite your comments on the public access channels, please feel free to comment on any aspect of your experience with Comcast cable TV service. I would point out that by regulatory law, there's nothing we can do about channel line-up or what Comcast charges.

Let me stress, finally, that we need your input now, not a week or a month from now. As you can see by our end date for a license we are facing a very tight time line. Our deliberations with your input need to start **now**. Also, please talk this over with your constituency and your friends. We'd like to hear from as many people as possible. The more input the better.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

*Bill Venman*

Bill Venman, Chair  
Cable Advisory Committee